Djibril Chimère Diaw

Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst.

Waxtaan: Dynamic Architecture of Language, Meaning and Social Cognition

Djibril Chimère DIAW

Copyright

Waxtaan: Dynamic Architecture of Language, Meaning and Social Cognition

Copyright © 2026 Djibril Chimère DIAW

All rights reserved

About The Author

Djibril Chimère Diaw

Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst.

Dedication

To

my mother Marème Fall

my father Amadou Chimère Diaw

my wife Isabelle Diaw

my children

Fatou-Chimère Diaw, Ahmadou-Chimère Diaw,

Marième-Chimère Diaw, Aïssata-Chimère Diaw .

my grandparents

Fatou Methiour Ndiaye & Waly Sega Fall

Fatou Faye & Souleymane Chimère Diaw

Teachers

To those who shall come into the world a century after me, beginning in the year two thousand and seventy-two.

To all mothers,
to those who made our coming into the world possible through the gift of themselves,
to those who, even today, carry, give birth to, nourish, protect, and raise life,
to those who, tomorrow, will continue to open the path of human existence.

To all women who, in silence or in light, have risked their bodies, their strength, and sometimes their lives so that humanity may endure.
To their quiet courage, their daily resilience, and their founding love.

May this work stand as an act of recognition,
a tribute passed on from generation to generation,
and a word of gratitude addressed to those without whom nothing would have been, nothing is, and nothing will be.

CONTENTS

Waxtaan: Dynamic Architecture of Language, Meaning, and Social Cognition....1
Copyright....2
About The Author....3
Dedication....5
Preface....8
Introduction....9
Waxtaan as a Dynamic Architecture of Language and Meaning....10
1. Waxtaan as an Interactional System....10
2. Tann wax: the initial decision to speak....11
3. Wax ju ñu tann: the structured quality of speech....12
4. Tann ci wax yi ñu wax: the retrospective construction of meaning....13
5. Waxtaan as a complete cycle of social cognition....14
6. Philosophical and social dimensions....15
Conclusion....16

Preface

This reflection on ***waxtaan*** is part of an inquiry into the deep structures of language and thought. The Wolof term *waxtaan*, often translated as “discussion” or “conversation,” actually encompasses a far broader field: that of the collective construction of meaning, the circulation of speech, and the progressive formation of knowledge.

Through a series of related notions_*wax, tann, wax ju ñu tann, tann ci wax yi ñu wax*_a genuine cognitive and social architecture of language emerges. *Waxtaan* is no longer merely a communicative act, but a complete process, ranging from the decision to speak to the selection and stabilization of meaning derived from discourse.

This study therefore proposes a linguistic, cognitive, and philosophical reading of a fundamental human phenomenon.

Introduction

Waxtaan is a central form of human interaction in Wolof-speaking societies. It is not limited to simple conversation; it involves complex mechanisms of production, selection, and interpretation of language.

Understanding *waxtaan* requires analyzing not only the act of speech (*wax*), but also the mental and social operations that frame it: the decision to speak (*tann wax*), the quality of produced speech (*wax ju ñu tann*), and the process of selection and integration of meaning after the exchange (*tann ci wax yi ñu wax*).

Thus, *waxtaan* can be seen as a **complete cycle of thought in action**, where language becomes simultaneously a means of communication, a tool of reflection, and an instrument for constructing shared knowledge.

Waxtaan as a Dynamic Architecture of Language and Meaning

1. Waxtaan as an Interactional System

Waxtaan designates a discursive space in which multiple speakers co-construct meaning. It is grounded in a fundamentally interactive logic:

- speech is never isolated
- meaning emerges from relation
- understanding is progressively built

From this perspective, *waxtaan* is a **dynamic system**, in which each intervention modifies the overall structure of discourse.

2. Tann wax: the initial decision to speak

Before any act of speech, there exists a decisive moment: ***tann wax***.

This process involves:

- a mental selection of ideas to express
- an assessment of context
- an intention to communicate

It is a fundamental act of cognitive freedom:

> speaking is never automatic, but results from an internal decision

Thus, *waxtaan* begins well before speech itself.

3. Wax ju ñu tann: the structured quality of speech

Once the decision has been made, speech can be described as ***wax ju ñu tann*** when it is:

- relevant
- measured
- carefully selected

This notion introduces an ethics of language:

- avoiding excess
- privileging clarity
- respecting communicative intelligibility

Waxtaan gains depth when exchanged words are filtered and structured in this way.

4. Tann ci wax yi ñu wax: the retrospective construction of meaning

After the exchange, another process takes place: selecting meaning from what has been said.

Tann ci wax yi ñu wax refers to:

- the hierarchization of exchanged ideas
- the extraction of essential elements
- the transformation of discourse into stable knowledge

This mechanism is fundamental:

> it transforms speech into structured memory and durable knowledge

5. Waxtaan as a complete cycle of social cognition

The entire structure forms a coherent cycle:

1. **tann wax** → intention to speak
2. **wax ju ñu tann** → structured production of speech
3. **waxtaan** → discursive interaction
4. **tann ci wax yi ñu wax** → integration of meaning

This cycle shows that *waxtaan* is not a simple exchange, but a **complete cognitive process**, involving decision, expression, interaction, and synthesis.

6. Philosophical and social dimensions

Waxtaan engages multiple levels:

- **cognitive**: organization of thought
- **linguistic**: structuring of discourse
- **social**: construction of relational bonds
- **epistemic**: production of knowledge

It thus becomes a space where:

> individual thought transforms into collective intelligence

Conclusion

Waxtaan, in its full structure, goes far beyond the notion of conversation. It constitutes a **dynamic architecture of language and meaning**, organized around successive acts of choice, expression, and selection.

From the decision to speak (*tann wax*) to structured speech (*wax ju ñu tann*), then to interaction (*waxtaan*), and finally to the synthesis of meaning (*tann ci wax yi ñu wax*), unfolds an integrated process in which language becomes a tool for intellectual and social construction.

Understood in this way, *waxtaan* appears as:

> a space where speech becomes thought, thought becomes exchange, and exchange becomes knowledge.

It is therefore not merely about communication, but about **collectively producing meaning through a deliberate and reflective use of langage.**